

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application in light of the preceding amendments and the following remarks is requested.

No claims having been added and previously withdrawn claims 35-37 having been canceled, the Applicants submit that claims 1-34 remain pending and properly under consideration in this application.

The Applicants note with appreciation the Examiner's participation in telephonic interviews with the Applicants' representative and the resulting suggestions regarding amendments to the independent claims to more clearly distinguish the claims from the teachings of the prior art. The Applicants submit that those suggestions are reflected in the amendments to the remaining independent claims 1 and 15 to incorporate the alloying metal concentration limitations from claims 7 and 26 respectively. The corresponding amendments to the dependent claims are intended solely to reflect the addition of the concentration limitation to the claims from which they depend and do not, therefore, constitute the introduction of new matter.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 5 and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by Amos et al.'s U.S. Patent No. 6,846,734 ("Amos"). The Applicants maintain their traverse of this rejection for the reasons detailed in the RESPONSE UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 filed July 3, 2006, the remarks from which are hereby incorporated by reference.

Accordingly, the Applicants again request that this rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Claims 1, 15, 21, 25, 31 and 32 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by Paton et al.'s U.S. Patent No. 6,797,614 ("Paton"). The Applicants maintain their traverse of this rejection for the reasons detailed in the RESPONSE UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 filed July 3, 2006, the remarks from which are hereby incorporated by reference.

Accordingly, the Applicants request that this rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 2-4, 6-9 and 11-14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Amos. The Applicants maintain their traverse of this rejection for the reasons detailed in the RESPONSE UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 filed July 3, 2006, the remarks from which are hereby incorporated by reference.

Accordingly, the Applicants request that this rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Claims 2-4, 7-9, 16-18, 26, 28-30 and 33-34 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Paton et al's U.S. Patent No. 6,797,614 ("Paton"). The Applicants maintain their traverse of this rejection for the reasons detailed in the RESPONSE UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 filed July 3, 2006, the remarks from which are hereby incorporated by reference.

Accordingly, the Applicants request that this rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Claims 5-6, 10-14, 19-20 and 27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Paton in view of Amos. The Applicants maintain their traverse of this rejection for the reasons detailed in the RESPONSE UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 filed July 3, 2006, the remarks from which are hereby incorporated by reference.

Accordingly, the Applicants request that this rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Claims 22-24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Paton in view of Chittipeddi et al's U.S. Patent No. 6,498,080. The Applicants maintain their traverse of this rejection for the reasons detailed in the RESPONSE UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 filed July 3, 2006, the remarks from which are hereby incorporated by reference.

Accordingly, the Applicants request that this rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above remarks and amendments, the Applicants submit that each of the pending objections and rejections have been addressed and overcome, leaving the present application in condition for allowance. A notice to that effect is requested.

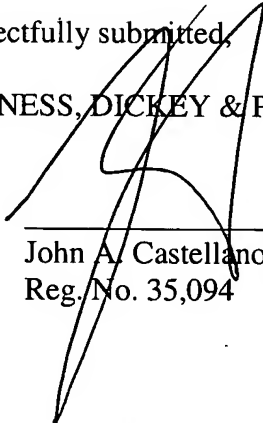
If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge any underpayment or non-payment of any fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17, or credit any overpayment of such fees, to Deposit Account No. 08-0750, including, in particular, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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